

HIKING JOURNEY

From The Mountains to The Mediterranean

WALKING IN SARDINIA, ITALY & CORSICA, FRANCE

14 DAYS



WALKABOUT
GOURMET ADVENTURES

Journey Overview

Sardinia has glorious beaches, dramatic cliffs, fascinating prehistoric sites and a wild interior roamed by shepherds. The churches, where Christianity and paganism mix, are part of Sardinia's fabulous mystique.

On our coastal rambles, mountain hikes and cultural exploration, we discover the best of this alluring island where we are never far from the glistening blue sea.

We catch the ferry for a short trip across the Straits of Bonifacio to Corsica. It is a mountainous island, 170 kms south of the French mainland, with an extraordinarily diverse landscape and is often referred to as the most beautiful island in the Mediterranean. Our carefully chosen route enables us to discover some of the most majestic mountain scenery, a spectacular coastline with vertiginous cliffs and wonderful sandy beaches. Our guided walk will take us past tumbling rivers, through forests of pine, silver birch and chestnuts, across hillsides of lavender, rosemary, thyme and an aromatic undergrowth that the locals call the Maquis, from which the French Resistance took its name.

We walk a section of the Sentier du Littoral and discover the wonderful rock garden of Les Calanches in the Golfe de Porto. In the heart of the Regional Nature Park of Corsica, it has been listed world natural heritage by UNESCO. From Piana we explore the beautiful Capo Rosso and Capo d'Orto.

In the "Desert des Agriates" near St Florent we follow a scenic coastal path with fascinating granite boulders and some pristine beaches against the deep blue of the Mediterranean.

Journey Schedule

DAY 1

Cagliari - Su Nuraxi - Su Gologone

DAY 2

Su Gologone - Supramonte - Gorropu Gorge

DAY 3

Walk to Monte Tiscali

DAY 4

Su Gologone - Nuoro - Tharros - Alghero

DAY 5

Capo Caccia - Grotto Di Nettuno - Punta Giglio

DAY 6

Alghero - Capo Testa - Santa Teresa - Bonifacio
(Corsica)

DAY 7

Out & About in Bonifacio

DAY 8

Bonifacio - Propriano - Piana

DAY 9

Piana - Capu Rossu

DAY 10

Free Day - Château Fort - Rock Garden of the Calanches

DAY 11

Piana - Capu d'Orto

DAY 12

Piana - Calvi - Saint Florent

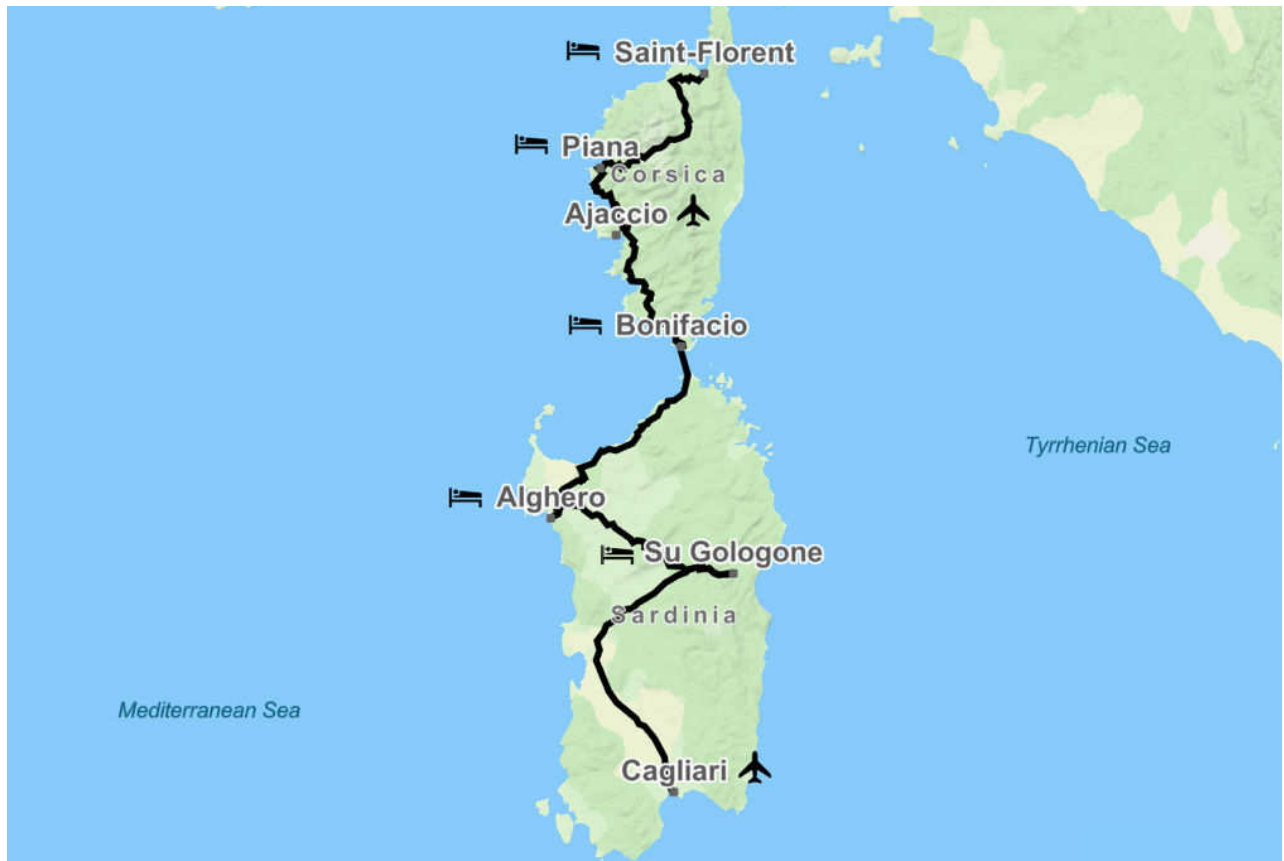
DAY 13

Desert des Agriates

DAY 14

Saint Florent - Corte - Ajaccio

Journey Itinerary



DAY 1

Cagliari - Su Nuraxi - Su Gologone

We meet at 10.00 a.m. at:

HOTEL ITALIA

Via Sardegna 31 in Cagliari

Tel. +39 070 66 05 10

It is a comfortable hotel conveniently located in the historic centre of town and close to the ferry port.

Among its wonders, in Sardinia we find the Nuragic complexes scattered all over the territory. These monuments are unique to the world, testifying to an ancient culture that - though it endured from the 16th to 15th centuries B.C. still remains rather mysterious. The Nuragic constructions were built using great blocks of stone and developed around a central cone-shaped tower that communicates strength and power. These are archaeological sites where it is possible to grasp the archaic charm of ancient rituals and domestic life.

Not far from the village of Barumini we find the famous Nuragic complex "Su Nuraxi". Thanks to its gracious and well-kept architecture this building can be considered as one of the most important testimonies of the Nuraghe culture, which is unique in Sardinia and had its "high-period" about 3,500 years ago. Around this kind of "fortress" the ruins of the ancient village can be seen, with the cultplaces, meeting places and housings.

After the guided visit of the ancient building we stop for a short lunch near the Tulli village. Here we start our walk up at the La Giara de Gesturi plateau, a high basalt plateau famous for its wild horses and uncontaminated natural beauty.

We arrive in the late afternoon in the beautiful, family-run hotel of Su Gologone in an impressive rural setting below the Sopramonte Massif. The architecture is distinctively Sardinian, and the hotel restaurant famed for its Sardinian specialities.

 **1 - 1 ½ HOURS**

 **SU GOLOGONE, SARDINIA, ITALY**

DAY 2

Su Gologone - Supramonte - Gorropu Gorge

Today we explore The Supramonte, a large limestone plateau in the heart of eastern Sardinia. and also the wildest part of the island. Formed over millions of years, erosion has created vertical walls, sink holes, fantastic grottoes, underground rivers and deep clefts. The countryside is exceptionally beautiful, with vegetation formed by vast woods of holm-oak, juniper groves and forests of alder, birch and oleander in the valley bottoms. Birds of prey are a common sight and the moufflons have found an ideal habitat for their survival. At one time the shepherds lived on the Supramonte in ancient huts, made of juniper wood and limestone; which are still visible in large numbers near our path. Their architecture is practically identical to similar constructions from prehistoric times. Our visit of the Gola di Gorropu Gorge is a natural spectacle with 400metres of sheer rock walls so close together they almost touch. Following the river along an undulating track, a steep little path takes us right down into the silent Gola di Gorropu Gorge, a magical place that deserves some time to take it all in. Very few plants survive under these conditions but fern and mosses take advantage of the dampness and lack of light. There are rare endemic insects, which spend their whole existence in this underground system. From here we ascend gradually on a wider track and return to our buses and our very comfortable hotel.

 **6 HOURS**

 **SU GOLOGONE, SARDINIA, ITALY**



DAY 3

Walk To Monte Tiscali

This morning we drive a short section into the Lanaittu valley from where we start our walk. We make our way up through the cliffs and eventually arrive at the village of Monte Tiscali, hidden deep in the mountain floor. There is an astonishing wealth of archaeological treasures in Sardinia. It is dotted with little Nuraghic villages that belonged to the first settlers, traces of an ancient era that went to gréât length to construct small huts, shelters called “Nuraghi” – hewn from the limestone rock with juniper branches for roofs. They are thought to date from between 1500 and 500 BC. The underground village of Tiscali is perhaps the most well-known, passing through the vast gorge of Scala de Surtana that is chiselled through the chalk cliffs. We return to our hotel on an old shepherd’s track and have time for a refreshing swim. Tonight, we meet for an aperitif in the beautiful lush garden surroundings followed by another delicious dinner in our hotel restaurant. Sardinia offers a concentration of gastronomic skills from the entire Mediterranean region which is as varied as its history.

 **6 HOURS**

 **SU GOLOGONE, SARDINIA, ITALY**



DAY 4

Su Gologone - Nuoro - Tharros - Alghero

Today we drive to the west coast of Sardinia. On our way we stop in Nuoro and visit the museum of costumes, one of the most interesting in town. The numerous rooms give us the impression of walking through a village. Sardinian costumes from various periods are presented, highlighting the specificities of each region. Musical instruments and replicas of culinary specialities are also on display.

We continue to the west coast and explore the ruins at coastal Tharros, one of Sardinia's most important archaeological sites. Phoenicians settled here as early as 800 BC. Tharros flourished under the Carthaginians and later became an important Roman site.

In the afternoon we continue to the west coast and the picturesque town of Bosa. From here we drive the 45 km long stretch along one of the most stunning coastal roads in Italy to Alghero and our charming hotel.

 **2½ HOURS**

 **HOTEL CATALUNYA, ALGHERO, SARDINIA, ITALY (B&D)**



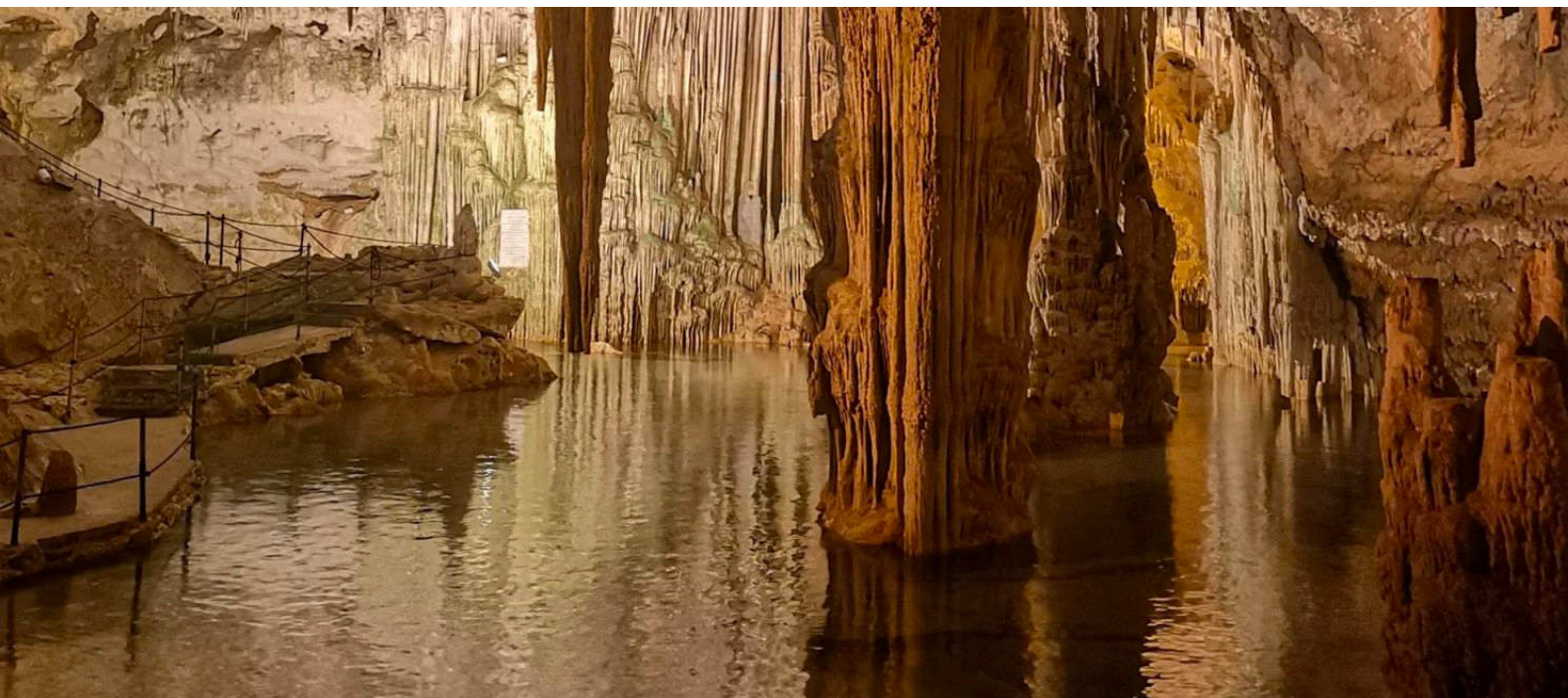
DAY 5

Capo Caccia - Grotto Di Nettuno – Punta Giglio

Today we drive to the spectacular promontory of Capo Caccia which is not far from the city of Alghero. Along the steep cliffs we discover a stunning landscape which is largely protected. Just a little bit further under the headland hides a total of 15 caves. The gigantic stalactite cave Grotte di Nettuno is undoubtedly one of the highlights. After our leisurely picnic lunch at the beach we follow an easy coastal walk to Punta Giglio in the Regional Park of Porto Conte near Alghero. Along our path, we enjoy magnificent landscapes over the bay of Porto Conte and the headland of Capo Caccia. At the end of our walk we join our busses and return to our hotel.

 **3 HOURS**

 **HOTEL CATALUNYA ALGHERO, SARDINIA, ITALY (B&D)**



DAY 6

Alghero - Capo Testa - Santa Teresa - Bonifacio (Corsica)

Today we leave our charming hotel and drive to the Santa Teresa Galura at the Northern tip of Sardinia. Around noon we stop at the lovely marina port of "Porto Rotondo", an ideal lunch break on our journey to Santa Teresa. Porto Rotondo is a popular base along the Costa Smeralda, a stretch of coastline, which has contributed a lot to Sardinia's fame.

In the afternoon we catch the ferry for a short ride across the Straits of Bonifacio to Corsica, disembarking at the fortified town of Bonifacio at the island's southern tip. It is the most Genoese of Corsican towns and owes a great deal of its beauty to its extraordinary coastal location. On all sides, white limestone cliffs are sculptured by the wind and waves and on the north side - Bonifacio Sound, a 1.5 km long fjord only 100 to 150 metres wide.

The old town is perched on top of a chalky cliff, watched over by its citadel and dominating the turquoise depths of the Bouches de Bonifacio from a height of almost 70 metres.

Soldiers of the King of Aragon gauged the famous 197 steps of the Escalier du Roi d'Aragon out of the cliffs under the cover of darkness in order to reach the sea. Our hotel is conveniently located down at the port and an ideal base to explore the harbour area and the town.

 **2 HOURS**

 **BONIFACIO, CORSICA, FRANCE**

DAY 7

Out & About in Bonifacio

Today we walk the surrounds of Bonifacio in a fantastic variety of terrains. In the morning we drive the few kilometres to the lighthouse of “Pertusato”, an impressive building sitting proudly on the cliff top, overlooking the narrow straight to Sardinia. We leave our buses and walk the fabulous cliff- top path back towards the town of Bonifacio. Along the easy, flat path, we can admire some of the most picturesque views of Corsica. Bonifacio comes into perspective as we progress along the bright white limestone cliff edge – 100 metres above the sea. An hour and a half later we are back in town for lunch. The afternoon is then free to explore Bonifacio and enjoy our hotel at the marina. Dinner tonight is at your own leisure. An ideal opportunity to try out one of the many tempting restaurants in the old town!

 **4 HOURS**

 **BONIFACIO, CORSICA, FRANCE**



DAY 8

Bonifacio - Propriano – Piana

Today we depart from idyllic Bonifacio and travel to Porto. Along the way, we take a side trip to Campo Moro, a lovely seaside village with a superb beach. It has the largest Genoese watchtower on the island which we take time to visit.

The tower top, easily accessed, commands superb views of the coastline. Time allowing, we have a short stroll down to and along the seashore before re-joining our buses.

In the late afternoon we arrive in In Piana at the Golfe of Porto. The site officially registered, as world heritage by UNESCO is breathtaking. The landscape is of red and orange mountains plunging straight into the blue sea. Erosion has carved the granite geology in all sorts of extraordinary shapes resembling people, animals and the most unlikely rock laces.

These amazing formations have been made even more unbelievable by the dissolving action of sea-water spray that has seeped into the granite's many fissures and carved out spherical cavities known as "taffoni".

Our hotel is at the edge of Piana and offers one of the most wonderful views of Corsica's coastline and perhaps some of the most extraordinary landscape anywhere in the Mediterranean basin. It overlooks the "calanques" (cliffs), the sea and the mountains (Paglia Orba, 2,550 metres) across the Golfe of Porto.

Tonight, we enjoy a splendid dinner in the restaurant, ideally situated to admire the sunset over the Mediterranean

 **6 HOURS**

 **PIANA, CORSICA, FRANCE**

DAY 9

Piana - Capu Rossu

Between the Golfe de Porto and the Golfe de Sagone is Capu Rossu, a scrub-covered headland with pink-grey rock plunging into the sea 300 metres below and crowned by the Tour de Turghiu.

We follow a pebbly path, which is lined with low stonewalls. In the distance we can clearly make out the silhouette of the Tour de Turghiu, perched on top of Capu Rossu. Soon we have spectacular views over the coast and the white sandy beach of Arone. The long fine sandy beach has a special place in Corsican history. It was here that the first weapons for the Corsican resistance arrived on a submarine in 1942.

After reaching the rocky base on which the Turghiu tower stands, we tackle the climb to the top of the tower. The view over the coastline from this fabulous viewpoint is an ample reward for all the efforts.

After lunch we retrace our steps and travel the short distance to Piana. Time for some coffee and a stroll through this pleasant village. In the 15th century it was ruled by the Seigneurs de Leca, who governed a vast area on the west coast of the island. Rebelling against Genoa, they were massacred alongside the defenders of the parish.

The Genoese then banned anyone from living in Piana, which only came to life again in 1690, after the decline of the Genoese republic.

 **4 HOURS**

 **PIANA, CORSICA, FRANCE**

DAY 10

Free Day - Château Fort – Rock Garden of the Calanches

Today you have the opportunity to relax and take in all the spectacular scenery of the Calanche from our hotel. Of course, those with itchy feet won't have any problem finding walking tracks starting near our hotel.

At the "Tete du Chien" (Dog's Head), which is a distinctively shaped rock, a rocky path leads you to a natural platform, known as the Château Fort, from where you have a stunning view over the Golfe de Porto and the deep rocky inlets of the Calanche.

You can retrace your steps to the "Tete du Chien" and stop for a refreshing drink at the Bar Chalet des Roches Bleues. Worth a visit is also the "Chemin de Muletiers" that linked Piana and Ota before the road was built in 1850.

Here you have magnificent views above the dazzling blue waters and on your descent, you walk through a rock garden of cliffs, which have been bizarrely chiselled by erosion and twisted into fantastic shapes. In the evening we meet for an aperitif before enjoying another dinner at our hotel.

 **AS SHORT OR LONG AS YOU LIKE**

 **PIANA, CORSICA, FRANCE**



DAY 11

Piana - Capu d'Orto

Today we walk straight out of the hotel and after carefully choosing our picnic lunch from the village grocery shop, we aim to scale the nearby mountain called “Capu d’Orto” to enjoy the most extraordinary view of the entire region from its 1,300 metres top.

Although significant, this climb in itself is not extravagant. The climb is regular enough, across changing surroundings of maquis, pine forests and bare pinkish granite boulders. We will probably encounter flocks of mountain goats in their colourful robes. The last section of the climb just before reaching the top is the steepest but by no means technical. As always with mountain walks, the reward at the top is enormous. The area that is embraced is huge, with snow-capped peaks to the east, the dark blue sea some 1,300 metres right down below. This, together with the feeling of achievement once at the top, makes it a truly memorable experience!

After shooting enough portraits of our proud selves at the peak, we start our descent back to Piana, using a different path under the cover of a thick pine forest providing welcome shade in the afternoon sunshine while we keep sight of the sea on the right hand side.

Back in Piana we are most likely to be tempted by Corsica’s locally brewed beer called “Pietra”, a very palatable beverage incorporating chestnut flower, which gives it a distinctive flavour and colour.

 **6 HOURS**

 **PIANA, CORSICA, FRANCE**

DAY 12

Piana - Calvi - Saint Florent

Today we reluctantly leave our hotel in Piana and travel to Saint Florent along Corsica's spectacular west coast. Along the way is Calvi, a former Genoese fortified town and harbour, nowadays a busy marina and beach resort.

The high peaks of the Muvrella region are clearly visible at short distance in the background. The superb Calvi Bay, with its long fine sandy beach, is embraced from the town's fortress walls.

After discovering this picturesque small town and some lunch, we continue our journey towards St Florent, passing a number of eye-catching hilltop villages in the Balagne area. St Florent is a lovely coastal village and marine harbour. Our hotel is close to a sandy beach with wide views over the Mediterranean and surrounded by lovely gardens. The evening is free to explore St Florent and dine in one of the local restaurants of your choice.

ST FLORENT, CORSICA, FRANCE



DAY 13

Desert dges Agriates

Today we walk the shores of the "Desert des Agriates" - a vast area of Mediterranean maquis (Mediterranean mixed bush) just out of Saint Florent. The area is called "desert" because it has been totally uninhabited from the ancient days as a result of the lack of water.

The section of coastal path we follow is one of the very popular walks on the island, which takes 2 full days if done in its total length. We concentrate on the most scenic part at its northern end. The path unrolls amidst the aromatic plants of the legendary Corsican maquis, a combination of smells that can be felt many miles out at sea and which all Corsican cherish so dearly. The coastline is spectacular with fascinating granite boulders and some pristine sandy beaches against the deep blue of the Mediterranean. Along the way we enjoy a refreshing swim in the turquoise Mediterranean. The wonderful garden setting of our hotel is the ideal place for a final aperitif before we enjoy our seafood dinner.

 **5 HOURS**

 **SAINT FLORENT, CORSCIA, FRANCE**



DAY 14

Saint Florent - Corte – Ajaccio

This morning we leave Saint Florent and travel to Corte, a proud and picturesque little town nestled at the foot of the Rotondo mountain (2,640 metres).

It has approximately 5,000 inhabitants and boasts an ethnic museum within the 14th century fortress walls, perched high above the town on a steep rock. Corte is the birthplace of Pascal Paoli, the true hero of the Corsican people, head of the Corsican state during the brief and only episode of Corsican independence between 1755 and 1769 when the French finally defeated his army.

After lunch and allowing time to explore this historic town, we continue our journey to the south of the island via the main inland highway.

The tour ends at approximately 5.00 p.m. at Hotel San Carlu in Ajaccio where we can recommend staying. It is centrally located beside Ajaccio's citadel and all of the historic part of town is within short walking distance.

Please book direct:

HOTEL SAN CARLU

8, Bd Danielle Casanove,

20000 Ajaccio, France

Tel +33 4 95 21 13 84



Journey Accommodation

Hotel Su Gologone, Oliena

NIGHT 1 - 3



Hotel Catalunya, Alghero

NIGHT 4 - 5



Hotel Solemare, Bonifacio

NIGHT 6 - 7

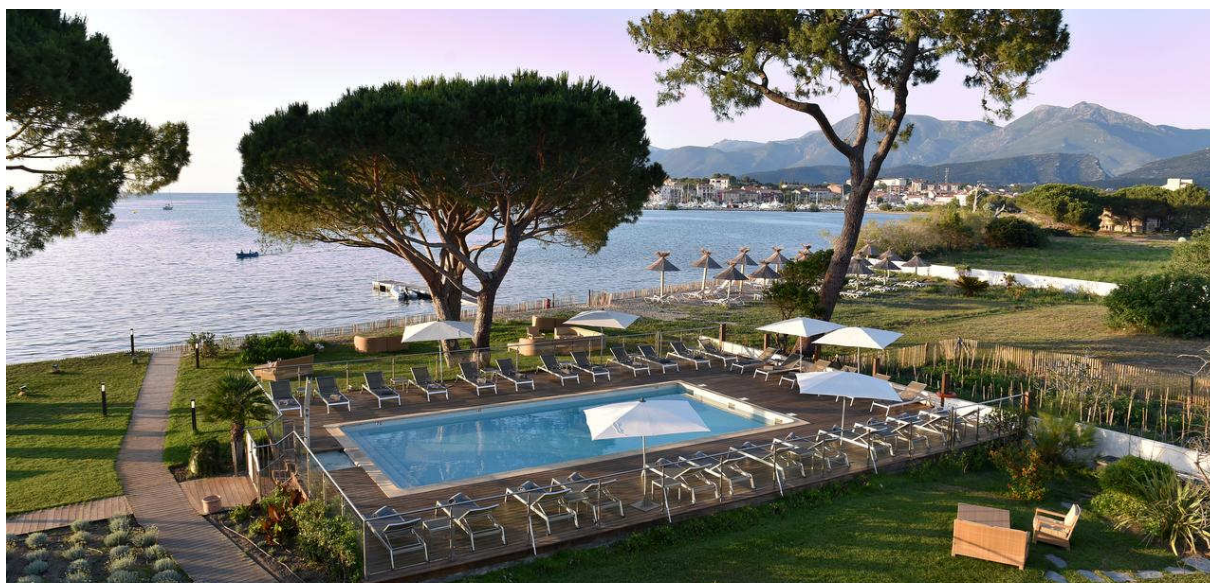


Hotel Capo Rosso, Piana

NIGHT 8 - 11



Hotel La Roya, Saint-Florent

NIGHT 12 - 13

Journey Notes

PRICE INCLUDES

- Experienced guides.
- Pick up at 10.00 a.m. in Hotel Italia, Via Sardegna 31 in Cagliari, Italy on Day 1 and drop off approximately 5.00 pm at Hotel San Carlu in Ajaccio (Corsica, France) on Day 14.
- Price includes transport between Cagliari, Sardinia, (Italy) on Day 1 and Ajaccio (Corsica, (France) on Day 14.
- Twin share accommodation from Day 1 to Day 13, including breakfast and 11 dinners.

NOT INCLUDED IN TRIP COSTS

Transport before and after “the walk”, lunch, 2 dinners, evening drinks, in-between meal snacks, personal travel insurance, personal clothing, laundry, medical expenses, entry fees and items of a personal nature.

PRE-WALK PREPARATION

We suggest that prior to your walking holiday you prepare yourself to obtain a level of fitness that will allow you to enjoy your walking holiday.

This, of course, is dependent upon your existing fitness level. Remember, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the holiday!

- Start with some short walks, which include stairs or hills and increase the length of walks over a couple of months.
- We suggest you carry a backpack with water, camera, jacket, snacks, etc. to assist you with your preparation and allow you to get used to the extra weight on your back.
- We also ask that your boots are comfortable and well worn in.
- Perhaps enjoy some walks through our local national parks and over uneven surfaces to gain confidence with your boots or new walking shoes.

WHAT TO BRING

Daypack, comfortable proper walking boots, thick socks, waterproof raincoat (Gore-Tex), and rain over-pants, hat, sunglasses, sun-cream and bathers. A pair of walking sticks makes the walking easier and helps with the balance on rough terrain. The weather in Corsica/Sardinia in May can be expected to be warm enough with temperatures in the mid-20s. Wet and cool air can be experienced at any time though, especially in the mountains, so it is necessary to carry at least one set of warmer clothes, just in case. For the picnic lunches don't forget your pocketknife. Corkscrew is available from the guides.

Please restrict your luggage to a maximum of 20kg.

PLEASE NOTE

All accommodation on tour includes private facilities (toilet and shower/bath).

Single rooms can usually be arranged for a supplement. Please ask for details. We will endeavour to match people together if they would like to share a twin room with another guest to avoid paying the single room supplement. However, as this is not always possible, 'single' clients will have to pay the supplement.

All walks during the 14 day tour are optional or can be taken in parts. Guests can choose to have more free days than the two already included in the itinerary.

The walking pace on all walks is leisurely. Guests do not have to be experienced, although a good level of fitness is necessary.

Get in touch and book your journey today.

 **0461 277 612**

 **info@walkaboutgourmet.com**

Follow the journey.



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